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3 November 1960

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Copy No. C 74

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



DOCUMENT NO. 3
NO CHANGE IN CLASS.
IN DECLASSIFIED
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S C
NEXT REVIEW DATE: 2010
AUTH: HR TO 2

DATE: 1 JUN 1980 REVIEWER:

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State Dept. review completed

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DAILY BRIEF

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

Turkey: The Committee of National Union (CNU) which has ruled Turkey for over five months now faces the prospect of increasing organized opposition. The prestige of the Gursel régime has been somewhat damaged by its handling of the current mass political trial of former Menderes government officials, as well as by the widely criticized recent dismissal by the CNU of nearly 150 faculty members of Turkey's five universities. As long as the bulk of the military establishment remains loyal, however, the CNU should have little difficulty in controlling the country, although force may be necessary.

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III. THE WEST

El Salvador: Communists and other leftist elements launched a strong bid for power on 1 November, less than a week after the military coup that ousted the Lemus administration. Their demands, circulated in street manifestoes and radiobroadcasts, include the elimination of the military from the government. Ex-President Osorio, the military figure who masterminded the 26 October coup and sought to win backing from the leftists by having them included in the provisional government, now is reliably reported to be uneasy and not in full control. The situation appears moving rapidly toward an open clash between the military--which, according to sources of the US Embassy, is rent by internal dissension--and civilian mobs stirred up by leftist agitators.

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Panama: Activities of the powerful Arias Madrid family are causing political uncertainty which could split President Chiari's weak coalition and threaten his month-old

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administration. Influential ex-Presidents Arnulfo and Harmodio Arias and Harmodio's sons are exploiting the deep-seated social discontent in the country to arouse students and the restless lower classes and to obtain the ouster of National Guard Commandant Col. Bolivar Vallarino, who, despite his general unpopularity, has for some time been one of the major forces for stability in Panama.

25X1

Panama.

3 Nov 60

iii

25X1

25X1

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Approved For Release 2003/02/27 : CIA-RDP79T00975A005400030001-8

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Turkey's Military Regime Losing Popular Support

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The Committee of National Union (CNU) is being widely criticized in Turkey and faces the prospect of increasing organized resistance. Popular criticism currently ranges from expressions of general disenchantment to organized conspiracy. [The most recent plot, reported to include retired army officers, air force noncommissioned officers, and civilians, led to several arrests and prompted special security measures throughout the military establishment.

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Discontent has also apparently increased among the peasants and in intellectual circles, contributing to the general atmosphere of uneasiness. There is no indication to date that the regime's conduct of the mass political trial of former Menderes government officials has succeeded in dispelling any of Menderes' popularity. In fact, the CNU's attempt to propagandize the trial has caused more damage to the prestige of the interim regime than to that of its predecessor. Nearly 50 of the accused face possible death sentences, and concern over the fate of ex-Premier Menderes is common to most expressions of discontent. [General Gur-sel and Foreign Minister Sarper, fully aware of the foreign as well as domestic impact of political executions, are working discreetly to avoid death sentences.] The final decision will rest with a majority vote of the entire membership of the CNU, among which there appears to be considerable support for the proposed executions.

The CNU is also being strongly criticized for the recent dismissal of nearly 150 faculty members from Turkey's five universities. The dismissals were followed by numerous faculty resignations and student boycotts in protest of the government's action. In the face of the strong protest, the CNU is apparently reconsidering its action.

If the regime continues to lose prestige, support for the CNU may also diminish among the military, enhancing the possibility of further instability. As long as the bulk of the army remains loyal, however, the CNU should be able to maintain control, although force and further repression may be necessary.

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Salvadoran Communists Join in Strong Leftist Bid for Power

Communists and other leftist elements in El Salvador launched a strong bid for power on 1 November, less than a week after the military coup that ousted the Lemus administration. Leftist demands, circulated in street manifestoes and in Communist-prepared radiobroadcasts, call for the immediate elimination from the governing junta and the cabinet of the "tools" of ex-President Osorio, who, they charge, is responsible for "all the political, moral, and administrative ills" of the country. The three military members of the six-man junta and the three military cabinet members are all known supporters of Osorio, who is probably the most influential military figure in the country. The demands, therefore, are in effect a call for the removal of all military officers from leading positions in the civil government. Under present circumstances, this would mean turning the regime over to the highly articulate leftists, who are strongly influenced by the Communists.

Osorio, who as president from 1950 to 1956 inaugurated moderate reforms designed to alleviate the country's deep-seated socio-economic problems, masterminded the coup against Lemus. He retains wide popularity among lower income groups and sought to win leftist backing for the junta by having leftists included in the provisional government. Osorio apparently intended to play a dominant role in the provisional government from behind the scenes. Now, however, he is reported to be very uneasy and worried, and his friends fear he may lose control.

The situation appears to be moving rapidly toward an open clash between the military and the civilian mobs stirred up by Communist agitation. Although the military is still the major force in the country, sources of the American Embassy claim that the army is split with internal dissension and may be seriously weakened. Unless Osorio or another popular military figure shows decisive leadership in meeting the leftist challenge, the Salvadoran Government could soon become completely dominated by pro-Communist elements. Such a development would have very serious implications for the stability of other Central American governments, particularly Guatemala and Nicaragua. 25X1

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Activities of the powerful Arias Madrid family are causing political uncertainty and instability in Panama which could split President Chiari's weak coalition and threaten his month-old administration.

Through Finance Minister Gilberto Arias, who represents the family's strong influence in the coalition, many strategic government posts have been filled by known leftists and seditious elements. Although he denied on 28 October that he was advocating revolutionary overthrow of the government, Roberto Arias has been ranting about the inevitability of social revolution to Panama's restless students and lower classes since his return from political exile a few weeks ago. Roberto led an abortive revolt against former President de la Guardia--whose ambassador in London he had been--which coincided with a Cuban-sponsored expedition against Panama in the spring of 1959. He is closely associated with irresponsible pro-Cuban revolutionaries, boasts of his friendship with Fidel Castro, and is known to be in contact with the Cuban Embassy in Panama.

Behind his sons is powerful lawyer, publisher, and businessman Harmodio Arias, himself a former president who for 40 years has plotted with and used any group he considers useful to his determination to dominate the country.

Also recently returned to political activity is Harmodio's half brother Arnulfo, a [redacted] political strong man who retains strong popular appeal despite having twice been ousted from the presidency. Although Arnulfo usually operates as a lone wolf, he has worked with Harmodio when it suited their purposes.

The activities of the Arias group are strengthened by ownership of three newspapers and some radio stations which they use for all-out campaigns such as the current one to oust National Guard Commandant Bolivar Vallarino, who has in recent years used his power to maintain Panamanian political stability.

President Chiari may soon be forced to break with the Arias forces, although such action might bring down his government. He will probably postpone his plan to reorganize the unpopular Guard and to transfer Vallarino, for fear of losing his strongest support. [redacted]

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